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SUBJECT: CANADA RATIFIES NATO ACCESSION PROTOCOLS FOR ALBANIA AND CROATIA

¶1. (U) Summary: On January 14, Canada announced its ratification of the protocols of accession to NATO for Albania and Croatia. Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon and Defence Minister Peter MacKay jointly noted that Canada's action would help move the two countries closer to membership in the alliance. End summary

¶2. (U) Canada has been a strong supporter of the NATO membership goals of the two countries. FM Cannon described Canada's ratification of the protocols as "the firmest expression of this support," which "sends a clear message that will inspire other NATO aspirant countries to continue on the path of integration and reform."

¶3. (U) Both ministers also expressed Canada's support for NATO's Open Door Policy. At the April 2008 Bucharest Summit committing NATO leaders to completing the ratification process without delay, then-FM David Emerson had described the accession of Albania and Croatia as constituting a "key success." With these ratifications, FM Cannon reiterated that the accession of the new members "strengthens" Euro-Atlantic security and that a swift ratification by member countries would enable Albania and Croatia to participate as allies at the NATO Summit in Strasbourg-Kehl in April.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: In the apparent interest of swift ratification, the government side-stepped its own year-old policy of submitting such international agreements to the House of Commons for a twenty-one sitting day period of review or comment (but not formal ratification). Parliament will not reconvene until January 26. It is unlikely that there would have been any serious objection within the House of Commons to the ratification.

WILKINS